

Government of the District of Columbia

Office of the
Director



Office of Planning
415 12th Street, N.W.,
Washington, DC 20004

NOV - 9 1993

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Albert G. Dobbins, III
Director

Elsabett Tesfaye
Community Planner

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OFFICE OF PLANNING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 15863

APPLICATION

Application of Marie E. Cone, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3107.2, for a variance from the 900 square feet of lot area per apartment requirement (Sub-section 401.3) to convert an existing structure to a three-unit apartment building in an R-4 District at premises 3002 11th Street, N.W. (Square 2850, Lot 206).

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends approval of this application.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to convert a two-story plus basement flat into a three-unit apartment building.

BZA

CASE No. 15863

EXHIBIT No. 26


11/10/93

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The site is located at 3002 11th Street, N.W., at the northwest corner of the intersection of 11th Street and Columbia Road N.W. The site comprises 2,697.2 square feet of land area and is improved with a two-story plus basement semi-detached structure which is vacant and currently undergoing renovation. The site abuts a 10-foot wide north-south public alley to the rear (west) and a row dwelling to the north. It has a 40.45-foot wide frontage on 11th Street to the east and a 78.26-foot frontage on Columbia Road to the south.

The immediate area surrounding the site is residential and is developed primarily with row single-family dwellings, flats and low-rise apartment buildings.

EXISTING ZONING AND RELIEF REQUESTED

The site is located in an R-4 District which permits matter-of-right development of residential uses including detached, semi-detached and row single-family dwellings and flats with a minimum lot width of 18 feet, a minimum lot area of 1,800 square feet, and a maximum height of three stories/40 feet. Conversions of existing buildings to apartments are permitted for lots with a minimum lot area of 900 square feet per dwelling unit.

The applicant is requesting a variance from Sub-section 401.3 of 11 DCMR to convert an existing structure to a three-unit apartment building. A copy of Sub-section 401.3 is attached to this report.

ANALYSIS

Project Description

The property originally consisted of two lots of record (i.e., lots 92 and 808 [tax lot]). Lot 92 is improved with a two-story plus basement structure (the existing building) which was constructed in 1907. The applicant bought the two lots in 1991 and subdivided them into a single lot of record (Lot 206).

Although the last authorized use for the existing building was as a flat, there is evidence that the interior of the structure had been modified to accommodate three dwelling units. The structure had been vacant for over 10 years when it was acquired by the applicant in 1991.

Prior to the subdivision of the property, the applicant sought a Certificate of Occupancy for a three-unit apartment use. Initially, the Zoning Administrator's office, based on available data, advised the applicant that the property meets the 900 square feet of land area per apartment requirement for the conversion of an existing building in the R-4 District. However, a subsequent computation by the Surveyor's Office revealed that the subdivided property falls 2.8 square feet short of the required 2,700 square feet of total land area (900 square feet per dwelling unit). The Zoning Administrator's computation for the relief requested in this case reflects the total land area as determined by the Surveyor's Office.

Presently, the renovation of the structure as a three-unit apartment building is near completion and the applicant is waiting for the decision on this case in order to complete the project and prepare it for occupancy. The existing structure comprises 3,415 square feet of gross floor area.

There is one on-site parking space located at the southwestern portion of the property. The parking space is accessed from the abutting public alley at the rear of the property.

Area Variance Request

The area variance requested in this case must meet three tests for zoning relief (refer to attachment). This application's compliance with those tests is discussed below.

Uniqueness/Practical Difficulty

There is a uniqueness in the property in terms of its characteristics. It is a corner lot and is the largest property in the area in terms of lot size and building gross square footage. It has two street frontages and is the only property on the block with a side yard. The site contains approximately 1,000 square feet of open space.

Public Good/Off-site Impacts

The existing structure was badly deteriorated and in deplorable condition when the applicant bought it two years ago. Its blighting influence on the immediate neighborhood had been a concern for the surrounding residents because it was harboring illegal activities. The renovation of the existing structure would result in better security, safety and stability for the neighborhood. It would also increase the housing stock in the city. Adverse impacts resulting from an additional unit within the existing structure would be minimal to non-existent.

Zone Plan

As noted, the Zoning Regulations require a minimum lot area of 900 square feet per dwelling unit for the conversion of an existing flat to apartments in an R-4 District. Therefore, a minimum total of 2,700 square feet of land area would be required in this case in order for the proposed conversion to be in conformance with the Zoning Regulations. The site consists of 2,697.2 square feet of land area, falling short of the zoning requirement by 2.8 square feet. The Office of Planning believes that the requested relief in this case is minor, approximately 0.1 percent of the requirement. As a result, the proposed three-unit apartment building would not impair the intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map for the R-4 District.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The site is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 1A. The ANC had not taken a position on this application at the time of this writing.

RECOMMENDATION

In the opinion of the Office of Planning, the requested relief is minor and, if approved, would not adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood in terms of environmental quality or noise. The area features a number of apartment buildings with a much larger number of units than are proposed for the property in question; hence, the proposed use of the property as a three-unit apartment building is not in disharmony with the existing character of the neighborhood. The proposal would not impair the intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map. Therefore, the Office of Planning recommends approval of this application.

Attachments